Dear Js, 2/5/73

After writing this letter to Edward Bennett Williams something that has been in the back of my mind for several weeks came back to me. It is about this that I write you and for which I send the letter. I'll explain.

In one of my conferences with the judge and the USAtty when I was pro se, the judge got after them when they were stalling on coming out and going over my files and getting anything they wanted, looking toward the possibilities of an out-of-court settlement or at least agreement on stipulations as to fact. He then told the government that he had already ruled in the case, that the sole question was the amount of damage, and that it seemed to him my offer was very reasonable. I have always felt this way and have, for years, acted on the basis of it, that the only questions were when we would get how much in damages. (I recently learned from the lawyer McNamara had looking out for our interest that the DOD thpught the Army had settled with us.) The work I did for Taft, of Williams' firm, includes a tabulation of egg-chicken losses alone and for the period covered by the suit, not for the ruin of the business. It shows losses of $35,000, approximately. So we felt we had a kind of security in this. We should have, for that was the real legal situation.

When I finally got our new lawyer cracking, the government first told him and then put in the form of a motion the allegation that we had almost no rights left because Williams had let the statute run after, administratively, I had stopped it myself. They seem to have a strong argument, unless, as I have often experienced in the past, they are not faithful to the law. Thus I wrote Williams as soon as I learned of it. He did nothing but finally said that when the Redksins were in LA he would see and would talk to Taft. He did not write on his return so I wrote him and enclosed a copy of the motion. The letter I quote is his total response.

It seems to me that if he did let the statute run, we'll have to wind up suing him, and I presume he is covered by insurance. Whether he did let it run will, I presume, be known when the motion is acted upon. That may not be until trial.

About when we learned of this, meaning I don't recall how much later, there was a change in Lil. She became much more depressed. A week ago today she was put on anti-depressants. She has been depressed for years. I knew this as a layman/husband knows it and because of the things I tried to do to overcome it with our medical service. Only relatively recently did I learn some of what their records show, those our present lawyer felt he had to take up with me because we will be confronting it in court at some point. We moved, by the way, leaving the farm, on which there was no mortgage, on medical advise that it was essential to Lil. These records do show that they detected depression in her, and other things. Instead of doing something about it, the shrink to whom I took Lil, on their staff, not a consultant, decided, during the one hour he was supposed to be learning about Lil, that I am shhizo, paranoid, delusionary and probably phobic to aviation. And more, but this is enough. He also said that Lil is certainly phobic to aviation. With this and other records that seem to have disappeared, there is, I feel, a clear case of mal-practise. I have no desire to file such a suit and at the moment don't see how I can. However, I have also learned over the years that it is vital to cope with such things, to make a stout effort, whether or not it succeeds, for there is no other real therapy and it overwhlems. Herein lies the difference between Lil and me and the magnitude of our reactions. I have been able to do the fighting and from it presume I have gotten some relief.

I feel that in may become necessary to tackle Williams and the medical service, not only for justide but for Lil. If it seems impossible, that does not keep me from thinking about it, to see if I can figure out how it might be possible if it becomes necessary and if it seems that there is a case.

Several weeks ago there was a story in the Post saying that Belli was opening a DC office. I know of Belli but two things: his dismal record in the Ruby case and with regard to the Warren Commission; and his very high reputation in medical-damage cases. I also presume that now most of his work is done by his staff, with him taking the more sensational or promising cases. What is your estimate of going to him now, meaning when, and of how he'd be with respect to Williams? (Who is one of Warren's closest friends. Taft was Warren's clerk. If you don't knew enough, do you know one I can safely consult? Thanks and sorry,